

**SPECIAL
CASCADE COUNTY COMMISSION MEETING
July 12, 2017
DEARBORN FIRE STATION
56 DEARBORN RIVER ROAD, CASCADE MONTANA
6:00 p.m.**

Notice: Pursuant to MCA 2-3-212(1), the official record of the minutes of the meeting is in audio form, located at cascadecountymt.gov and the Clerk and Records Office. This is a written record of this meeting to reflect all the proceedings of the Board. MCA 7-4-2611 (2) (b). This written record was officially approved on August 8, 2017.

This special meeting/public meeting is a joint Commission meeting with Lewis and Clark County Commissioners in the matter concerning the action to approve/disapprove a resolution to increase fees for the Dearborn Volunteer Fire Service Area.

PRESENT:

Lewis and Clark Commissioners: Madam Chair Susan Good Geise, Commissioner Andy Hunthausen, and Commissioner Jim McCormick

Lewis and Clark Staff seated with the Commission: Charles Lane-Deputy County Attorney, Roger Bultz-Chief Administrative Officer, and Matt Heimel-Special District Coordinator, Mieke Hash-Deputy County Attorney.

Cascade County Commissioners: Chairman Jim Larson, Commissioner Jane Weber, and Commissioner Joe Briggs.

Cascade County Staff seated with Commission – Carey Ann Haight-Deputy County Attorney and Chief Deputy Clerk and Recorder-Marie Johnson.

Public Present that signed the attendance sheet: Erik Brown, Dan Ryan, Hugo Anderson, Bonnie Anderson, Jim Batley, Nancy Traub, Ed Mortin, Matt Heimel, Rodney A. Strauss, Charles Lane, Fred Shewman, Helen Shewman, Dewitt Burrows, Frank Burrows, Ron Mammen, Don Wheeler, Jennifer Leslie, Kevin Leslie, Kim Wallace, Tom Bernard, Barbara Phillips, Glen Lambert, Janet Thompson, Ken Heinert, Dennis A. Bickel, Leslie Humanny, Linda Greaves, Russ Greaves, Mark Stouffer, Vickie Stouffer, William Bachtel, Sarah J. Howantz, Joe Slocum, Vincent Paul Howantz, Bill Jagers, Ned Jagers, Linda Hinebauch, Wilson Ahlert, Ann Gerdes, Jim Weinhandl, Susan Maclin, Martha Bateman, Helen Blake, Fred Shewman, Helen Shewman, Jim Ahrens, Wade Crittenden, Dixie

Allen, Matt Whelan, Karen Judge, Judy Fettig, Dawn Allee, Marsha Clark, Mitt Smith, Ronald Turigiatto, Richard Frye, and Sharon Frye.

CALL TO ORDER: Lewis and Clark Madam Chair Susan Good Geise called the special meeting to order.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Everyone participated in reciting the pledge of allegiance.

INTRODUCTION OF STAFF: Both County Commissioner Chairman had introduced themselves and their staff.

STAFF REPORT: Madam Chair Good Geise reminded the public of the rules of public comment.

Roger Bultz announced that he received an email and letter that outlined the tiered approach.

Adrienne Kernaghan-Treasurer of the Board of Trustees presented the revised tier schedule with the maximum fire fee being \$200.00.

Tom Bernasek 6 Cooper Drive spoke in support of the tier schedule but requested that the lowest fee of 75.00 stay the same.

Pat Rambo 11 Gunsight Lane stated he was strongly against the fire fee increase and shared his concerns.

Jamie Ivers of 319 Dear Lick announced that it is ridiculous to raise the fees or think that the fire department is able to suppress fires.

Helen Blake 46 Willington Lane supports the fire fee increase and spoke about how the fire department assisted them with downed power lines.

Jim Ahrens 4860 Craig Frontage Road spoke in favor of the fire fee increase and requested that the Commissioners support the Volunteer Fire Departments efforts.

Milt Smith 17 Chokecherry Lane opposes the fire fee increase and felt that the presentation was false.

John Kernaghan 2808 Old US Hwy 91 is in favor of the fire fee increase and was frustrated with the negative feedback from others.

Glen Lambert from Cascade Farmers Union Insurance Co. stated that the fire insurance rates will go up and encouraged them to support the fire fee increase to strengthen the fire service they are provided.

Roy Stock Sugarloaf Mtn. is in favor of the increase, asked that everyone support the Board, and realize that this is an evolving process.

Steve White 20 N. Cooper Ln. spoke in opposition for the fire fee increase stating he is on a fixed income and cannot afford it.

Rodney Struss is opposed to the fire fee increase and shared his concerns.

Commissioner Weber read an email into the record for Pat Hammick who is support of the fire fee increase (see exhibit "A"). **Burton Phillips 40 Upper Sawmill Rd** spoke in favor of a sliding scale and had questions about fundraisers and grant writing. **Janet Thompson Great Falls** spoke as an informational witness stating that she works for Cascade Mutual and suggested that they seek grant writers and consider fundraising to offset their costs. **Mr. Howanitz 285 Hideaway Lane** presented several websites that provide free or used fire trucks and suggested that they research these sites.

Wade Crittenden 3599 Bratton Loop stated that he is a firefighter in Wolf Creek says he has talked to young folks who want to volunteer and commented that the tier scale is not a true sliding scale and he wants the maximum fee to be \$25.00.

Jim Batley 30 Eagle Rock Circle is the former Fire Chief, announced he is opposed to the fee, and noted that there were discrepancies in the Great Falls Tribune article.

Dan Ryan 1 Eagle Rock Circle mentioned that other fire departments have received grants from Town Pump and FEMA and suggested they look into this. He stated no matter what equipment they use they cannot get to the fires due to the road conditions.

Barbara Phillips 40 Upper Sawmill Road noted that with the fire last week the house was lost and the neighbors fought the fire.

James Beck 303 Dearborn River Road President of the Landowners Association invited the Commissioners to examine their roads and help with the repair of them, as it is a safety issue to get fire trucks to the fires.

END OF PUBLIC COMMENT: Madam Chair Good Geise thanked everyone and stated that his or her comments will be taken into consideration. The public comment ended at 7:06 p.m.

CALL FOR A HAND VOTE:

Madam Chair Good Geise also called for a hand vote on the fee increase; For the \$200.00 fee (4 people raised their hands), For the tiered fee schedule (24 people raised their hands), For opposition (15 people raised their hands).

DISCUSSION AMOUNGST COMMISSIONERS AND THE DEARBORN FIRE DEPARTMENT:

There was discussion and questions amongst the Commissioners and The Dearborn Fire Department (Please refer to the official record of the minutes of the meeting that is in audio form, located at cascadecountymt.gov and the Clerk and Records Office for details).

MOTION: Resolution 17-63 R0343666

Cascade County Commissioner Joe Briggs made a **MOTION** to amend the fire service area fee to \$90.00 be the low end fee for the

Dearborn Volunteer Fire Service Fee Area. Commissioner McCormick **seconded the motion.**

MOTION: Madam Chair Good Geise amended the **MOTION** to clarify that Tier 1 would change to \$90.00 and the other tiers would stay the same with Tier 4 being \$200.00. **Motion carries 6-0**

PUBLIC COMMENT: Donald Wheeler 525 Upper Sawmill

Road thanked the Commission and questioned why Cascade County could not split this fee on his taxes.

ADJOURNMENT: Madam Chair Good Geise and Chairman Larson adjourned the special meeting at 7:47 p.m.